

**General Assembly**

Distr.: General
12 October 2015

Original: English

Seventieth session
Second Committee
Agenda item 20
Sustainable development

**Letter dated 8 October 2015 from the Secretary-General of the
World Tourism Organization addressed to the Chair of the
Second Committee**

I have the honour to refer to resolution A/RES/653 (XXI), adopted by the General Assembly of the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) at its twenty-first session, held in Medellin, Colombia, from 12 to 17 September 2015, *inter alia*, acknowledging with appreciation the initiative of Samoa, together with several other delegations, for the General Assembly of the United Nations to proclaim 2017 as the International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development.**

The recommendation by the General Assembly of UNWTO is made in view of the fact that international tourism is an increasingly significant component of international trade, as evident in export earnings from international tourism and passenger transport, which reached \$1.5 trillion in 2014. International tourism (travel and passenger transport) represents 30 per cent of the world's exports of services and 6 per cent of overall exports of goods and services. As a worldwide export category, tourism ranks fourth after fuels, chemicals and food, and in many developing countries it ranks first. International tourist arrivals have also consistently shown an increase in all the regions, including an overall increase of 4.4 per cent in 2014, reaching a total of 1,135 million, up from 1,087 million in 2013, and proving the sector's capacity to stimulate economic growth, boost exports and create jobs. The objectives of the proposal are to:

- Increase awareness among public and private stakeholders, in particular tourists themselves, about their participatory role in harnessing the contribution of tourism to sustainable development and peace
- Provide for a better understanding of sustainable tourism and its contributions to economic growth, inclusive development and environmental sustainability in both developing and developed countries

* Reissued for technical reasons on 22 October 2015.

** Available at: http://dtx4w60xqp.cloudfront.net/sites/all/files/pdf/a21_res_final_en_0.pdf, p. 31; see also http://dtx4w60xqp.cloudfront.net/sites/all/files/pdf/a21_0S_i_c_unwto_in_the_united_nations_system_add_1_en_0.pdf.



- Promote policies and business practices that advance the contribution of tourism to the implementation of relevant sustainable development goals

May I also bring to your kind attention the fact that, pursuant to article 3, paragraph 2, of the Agreement between the United Nations and UNWTO, as adopted by the United Nations General Assembly and set forth in the annex to its resolution 58/232 of 23 December 2003, written statements presented by UNWTO shall be distributed by the Secretariat of the United Nations to the members of the Main Committees and other organs of the Assembly. Based on the foregoing, I would be grateful if you could have the present letter circulated as a document of the Second Committee under agenda item 20, entitled "Sustainable development".

(Signed) Taleb Rifai
